

# University of Southampton

## Summary of 2024-25 to 2027-28 access and participation plan

What is an access and participation plan?

An access and participation plan (APP; Plan) sets out provisions that will be meaningful and effective in promoting equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups, as determined by the Office for Students.

You can see the full access and participation plan for University of Southampton at [www.southampton.ac.uk/about/governance/access-agreement.page](http://www.southampton.ac.uk/about/governance/access-agreement.page)

### Key points

We proudly promote egalitarianism as a core value, and believe diversity makes us a stronger organisation. Our Plan focuses on how we will make the University of Southampton more inclusive by supporting students from underrepresented groups to access, succeed at and progress from our institution and higher education more broadly.

By analysing our data, we have identified key areas to prioritise so we can achieve our goal:

- Students from lower socio-economic groups (those who have been eligible for free school meals or those from areas with the highest indicators of deprivation) are less likely to come to Southampton, attain the highest grades and progress to graduate employment or further study than their more advantaged peers
- Black students are less likely to be awarded the highest grades than White students
- Students with certain disabilities (a mental health condition or a social or communication impairment) are less likely to continue with their studies than students without a disability.

These priorities are addressed through a series of objectives, targets, and intervention strategies which make up the main substance of this Plan. We can also see short term trends for other risks to equality of opportunity which we will closely monitor and act if necessary.

See pages 1-4 of the access and participation plan for more information.

### What we are aiming to achieve

We aim to be one of the leading universities for equality of access in our region as well as one of the leading institutions for students' success and progression within the Russell Group. To achieve this, we have closely analysed our performance and set challenging targets and objectives.

We have a suite of six objectives which seek to address nine targets. By meeting these we will:

- Increase the proportion of students coming to the University a) from postcodes which are in the lowest quintile of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation and b) who have been eligible for free school meals
- Reduce the gap in continuation between both students with a mental health disability and those with a social and / or communication impairment and students without a disability
- Reduce the gap in awarding between Black students and White students
- Reduce the gap in awarding between a) students from postcodes which are in the lowest quintile of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation and those from other postcodes and b) students who have been eligible for free school meals and those that have not
- Reduce the gap in progression to graduate level employment or further study between a) students from postcodes which are in the lowest quintile of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation and those from other postcodes and b) students who have been eligible for free

school meals and those that have not.

See page 5 of the access and participation plan for more information.

#### What we are doing to address keys risks to equality of opportunity

We have six intervention strategies which we believe will enable us to meet our ambitions. Each of the strategies houses a set of intensive activities which have been developed using supporting evidence, either from existing research or internal evaluation. The strategies are:

- Increase applications, offers and enrolments of students from lower socio-economic groups
- Ensure that students from lower socio-economic groups have equality of opportunity to stay and thrive at Southampton
- Improve the retention rate of students with a social and / or communication impairment
- Improve the retention rate of students with a diagnosed mental health condition
- Improve the student experience for Black students, ensuring they can feel comfortable to stay and thrive at Southampton
- Reduce gaps in progression for students from lower socio-economic groups.

In addition, we will continue to provide wider reaching high quality activities to learners in schools and colleges and to support the success and progression of our own students. We will both deliver our own activity and work with partner organisations to ensure our programme is robust and effective.

See pages 5-23 of the access and participation plan for more information.

#### Financial help available

Financial support is a key pillar of our strategy to support students achieve the best grades possible. Students with a household income of less than £30,000 are eligible for the University of Southampton Bursary if they are:

- fully enrolled undergraduate
- paying the full £9,250 tuition fees
- have a household income of £30,000 or less, as assessed by Student Finance England, Student Finance Wales, Student Finance Northern Ireland or Student Awards Agency Scotland

Students with a household income of up to £16,000 are entitled to £2,000 per year, and those with a household income of £16,001 to £30,000 will receive £1,000 per year.

Exclusions apply and can be found on our website: [Undergraduate bursaries | University of Southampton](#)

See page 11 of the access and participation plan for more information.

#### Information for students

We have a range of both online and face to face methods to make both current and prospective students informed on all aspects of university life including fees and financial assistance. The University's website provides information on our programmes, on university life, the local area, and the Financial Support offer. We run face to face Open Days and prospective students visit days and provide online chat services, an interactive prospectus, a student portal and a variety of social media channels for current and prospective students to engage with.

See pages 30-31 of the access and participation plan for more information.

### Fees we charge

For 2024/25 entry the University of Southampton will charge £9,250 for UK Undergraduate fees. This will be subject to change in subsequent years and the University may increase its fees in line with fee limits set out in regulation.

### How students can get involved

Students are represented in a variety of ways and can participate through several channels. Southampton University Students' Union (SUSU) is represented at every layer of governance of access and participation activity and have direct input into steering the direction of our work.

We have an established Student Advisory Board made up of students who have participated in our programmes to co-govern, design and deliver activity. Students are active and valuable members of our Widening Participation and Social Mobility team, through our ambassador and internship schemes, and are integral to the successful delivery of our programme.

We also have a panel of Research Associates comprised of PhD students to evaluate specific aspects of access and participation work which feeds into our deepening understanding of what is working and why.

To find out more about these opportunities, please contact the Widening Participation and Social Mobility team using the contact details below.

See pages 28-29 of the access and participation plan for more information.

### Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

Evaluation is embedded into the way we work. All delivery staff are trained in developing and maintaining Theories of Change for their activity and are supported by a central Evaluation team. Each of the Intervention Strategies in this Plan have supporting Theories of Change for all activities contained within them and are evaluated using a combination of methods to the full range of OfS evaluation standards, from narrative to causal, depending on their type and intensity.

We will publish findings from our evaluation on our website.

See pages 6-23, 29-30 and 59-77 of the access and participation plan for more information.

### Contact details for further information

Please contact the Widening Participation and Social Mobility team on [wpsm@soton.ac.uk](mailto:wpsm@soton.ac.uk) for more information.